

Town of Newfields
First Session of the 2015 Annual Meeting
Deliberative Session Minutes-February 3, 2015

Selectmen: Chairman Michael Woodworth, Jamie Thompson and Chris Hutchins.

Moderator: John Hayden

Town Clerk: Sue McKinnon

Moderator John Hayden called the meeting to order at 7pm and called for the pledge of allegiance. He introduced the head table and reviewed the rules and procedures of the meeting. John explained that this session was to debate, discuss and amend the warrant articles. He added that a secret ballot vote can be requested by 5 registered voters.

Article 1. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Million, Five Hundred and Seventy Five Thousand Dollars (\$1,575,000.00) for the renovation, code compliance upgrade and addition to the Town Hall to accommodate the Town Offices, Town Hall and Town Police Department and to authorize the issuance of not more than One Million, Five Hundred and Seventy Five Thousand Dollars (\$1,575,000.00) of bonds and/or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (NH RSA Chapter 33) and to authorize the Selectmen to issue, negotiate, and regulate such bonds and/or notes and to determine the rates of interest thereon. Recommended by the Selectmen

A two thirds (2/3) majority ballot vote in favor is required for passage.

The Moderator read Article 1. A motion was made by Joe Perna and seconded by Wayne Steneck to allow Architect Gary Goodreau to speak regarding the town hall and police department renovations. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Joe Perna showed a brief PowerPoint presentation detailing the project design. The town offices and meeting rooms consist of 3,200 sq feet with a meeting hall 88% of the existing hall size. The police department consists of 4,040 sq feet. The design will meet the needs of the town for the next 20-30 years.

Jamie Thompson stated that the tax impact will be .62 cents per thousand of assessed value. A \$100,000 home would see an increase in taxes of \$62.00 per year and a \$500,000 home would see an increase of \$310.00 per year.

Jeff Buxton asked the length of the bond. It will be a 20 year bond according to Jamie Thompson.

Don Doane asked about the bond rate. Jamie stated that rates are low; between 3 to 3.5 percent at this time.

Mike Price asked how much of the 40k warrant article had been spent on the project. Wayne Steneck stated that \$38,611 has been spent to date.

Steve Coes is concerned that if this warrant article passes there will be two warrant articles voted on by the townspeople for the same purpose. There was a warrant article in 2001 to purchase the old post office for the purpose of a police department and this warrant article is for a renovation and addition to the town hall for the purpose of a police department and town offices. Common sense tells him that this is a problem. He has asked the Board of Selectmen on several occasions if this issue has been addressed and he has received no answers. Steve read Article 3 from 2001.

Jamie Thompson stated that no additional money was ever appropriated to move forward with the renovation of the old post office.

Steve Coes said the Board should have rescinded the previous vote of 2001. There has been nothing done to reconcile the previous vote. He is surprised the Board of Selectmen and Facility Committee members did not address the 2001 warrant article before moving forward.

Betsy Coes questioned whether or not the DRA reviewed the warrant articles. She is concerned that if the warrant article passes the Board of Selectmen will be unable to obtain the bond because of the conflicting warrant article of 2001. The previous warrant article to purchase the old post office for the purpose of a police department should have been rescinded.

Mike Woodworth said the warrant articles were reviewed by DRA but there was no mention made of the 2001 warrant article.

Kerry Gosselin asked if it was possible to amend the warrant article and set aside the vote of 2001. Moderator Hayden said it was not possible because such an amendment would change the purpose and intent of the article.

Dave Edgerly commented that we have already changed the purpose of the building by leasing it.

Betsy Coes added that a lease is a temporary contract. There is nothing preventing the town from leasing the property.

Tom Rogers added that a survey was sent out to the residents asking them where they would like the police department located. 64% of the respondents agreed that it should remain in the town hall.

Steve Coes stated that the input you get from a questionnaire depends on what you ask. There has been a concerted effort to avoid the old post office. The police department at the old post office has been the plan all along. He added that he would probably vote for the town hall renovation but can't knowing that the town voted in 2001 to have it at the old post office.

Dave Edgerly commented that the police facilities committee was not allowed, by last year's warrant article, to look at alternatives.

Steve Coes said that did not prevent the Board of Selectmen from looking into renovating the old post office for the police department.

Wayne Steneck stated that he can appreciate how Steve Coes feels. The Committee intentionally did not design the survey. They brought in someone from outside to formulate the survey.

Steve Coes added that the survey was designed by an outside consultant but he was never told about the 2001 warrant article.

Mike Price said that this is a legal issue. An attorney should be consulted.

Moderator Hayden commented that the Selectmen can only get a legal opinion at a date and time beyond tonight.

A motion was made by Dan Conner and seconded by Kerry Gosselin to move the article.

There was no further debate. Article 1 shall be placed on the ballot as written.

Article 2. Shall the Town of Newfields raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the Warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling One Million, Three Hundred Eighty Six Thousand, Seventy Dollars (\$1,386,070.00). Should this be defeated, the default operating budget shall be One Million, Three Hundred Sixty Two Thousand, Seven Hundred Thirty Four Dollars (\$1,362,734.00) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Newfields or by law or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. Selectmen recommend the \$1,386,070.00 as set forth on said budget

Jamie Thompson commented on several line items. The increase in general government buildings is for additional maintenance and additional design work for the town hall renovation project.

The police line item has increased due to additional part time staffing and for bullet proof vests.

The highway budget has increased because we are no longer presenting a separate warrant article for paving.

There have been increases for employees, insurance and allocations to pensions.

The budget has increased overall 1.7% over last year.

Jeff Buxton asked about the increase in the Library budget. Jamie said the increase is for wages and additional allocations for maintenance.

Library Trustee Kim Crisp said the extra money in their budget is for maintenance and extra books. Last year they had a tree fall on the building which cost them unexpectedly. The extra money will provide a buffer if necessary repairs or maintenance arise.

Don Doane asked about the overlay. Sue McKinnon said that the overlay was 20k and it is used for abatements. The unreserved fund balance was 8% of our total collections.

A motion was made by Mike Sununu and seconded by Kerry Gosselin to end debate on Article 2. All were in favor and Article 2 shall be placed on the ballot as written.

George Shaw asked if an amendment could be made to warrant article 1 to rescind the warrant article of 2001.

John Hayden explained that it could not be done. This meeting does not have the authority to change the purpose of the article. You may not include a purpose on a warrant article that was not warned before this meeting. In addition, we have moved past warrant article 1.

Article 3. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seventeen Thousand Nine Hundred Dollars (\$17,900.00) for the purpose of mosquito control by town wide adulticiding (truck spraying)? Recommended by the Selectmen 2-1

There was no discussion and Article 3 shall be placed on the ballot as written.

Article 4. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty-Two Thousand Dollars (\$32,000.00) for the purposes of mosquito control by targeting mosquito larvae (known as larviciding) and Arbovirus Surveillance (known as trapping and testing of mosquitoes)? Recommended by the Selectmen

Mike Sununu asked whether or not the Selectmen have required or received any documentation on the effectiveness of mosquito spraying.

Jamie Thompson said the Board was provided with an annual review of what was done and the results of testing. There was no additional documentation requested or provided.

With no further questions, Article 3 shall be placed on the ballot as written.

Article 5. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund for the future purchase of a fire truck. The Selectmen were previously named as agents to expend from the fund. Recommended by the Selectmen

Jamie Thompson stated that we have been appropriating money each year for the future purchase of a fire truck. It is a long term plan moving along towards that goal. When we eventually purchase a fire truck the cost will be \$400,000 to \$500,000 dollars. When the lease payments on the air packs have been completed these yearly appropriations will increase.

There was no discussion and Article 5 shall be placed on the ballot as written.

Article 6. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) to pay accrued leave when an employee retires. The funds are to be placed in the previously established Retirement Benefits Expendable Trust Fund. The Selectmen were previously named as agents to expend from the fund. Recommended by Selectmen

Jamie Thompson said this money is for employee accrued vacation and sick time when an employee retires. Currently we have 20k in the fund and we need about 40k. There is a limit on the amount of vacation and sick time an employee is entitled to.

Mike Sununu asked if the Board could tell him who the employee is that is owed this money.

Sue McKinnon said there are potentially only two employees who can retire and they are her and Police Chief Art Reed.

There was no further discussion and Article 6 shall be placed on the ballot as written.

Article 7. Shall the Town adopt the provisions of RSA 72:61-64 inclusively, which provide for an optional property tax exemption from the property's assessed value, for property tax purposes, for persons owning real property, which is equipped with solar energy systems intended for use at the immediate site. Such property tax exemption shall be in the amount equal to 100% of the assessed value of qualifying solar energy equipment under these statutes. Recommended by Selectmen

Mike Woodworth explained that this exemption is for residents who install solar energy equipment. It provides an exemption from the value of the solar power equipment investment.

Dan Conner explained that there is no money savings for the homeowner. The town is not losing money; it is an incentive for residents to install solar equipment.

A motion was made by Steve Coes and seconded by Dan Conner to amend Article 7 and add, "sole use" at the immediate site. The motion to amend was voted on and passed. Article 7 will be placed on the ballot as amended.

Article 8. To see if the Town will vote to establish a Stormwater Infrastructure Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19a, for stormwater mapping and drainage infrastructure and to raise and appropriate the sum of Six Thousand Dollars (\$6,000.00) to placed in the fund; further to name the Selectmen as agents to expend from the fund. Recommended by Selectmen

Jamie Thompson said this article will allow the town to participate in mapping projects and receive grants. Stormwater mapping will improve stormwater management and help us comply with the federal requirements on the amount of nitrogen allowed to be discharged into Great Bay.

Mike Sununu questioned why we are establishing the fund. Planning Board Chair Jeff Feenstra said last year this money was in the planning board operating budget and was not used. Putting the funds in a trust fund allows the money to remain each year for when it is needed and grants become available.

Mike Sununu commented that this is an operational item and should be included in the budget. We keep allowing the Selectmen to have the responsibility of spending the town's money. It is the resident's responsibility to decide where our money gets spent. He is in favor of adding the money to the budget of the planning board but not allowing the Selectmen the discretion to dispense the funds.

Article 8 shall be placed on the ballot as written.

Article 9. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Forty Thousand Dollars, (\$240,000.00) for construction of sidewalks on Piscassic Rd (Route 87) from Meadow Road to Dixon Avenue and on Main St (Route 85) from Railroad Ave to Route 108 with a total length of approximately 2,575 lineal feet. Eighty percent (80%) or One Hundred Ninety Two Thousand Dollars (\$192,000.00) will be reimbursed to the Town through a New Hampshire Department of Transportation -Transportation Alternative Program Grant. The final cost to the Town will be Forty Eight Thousand Dollars (\$48,000.00). (Recommended by the Selectmen)

Jeff Feenstra stated that the Planning board started working on this grant last year and unfortunately we didn't receive the grant. A motion was made by Jeff Feenstra and seconded by Dave Edgerly to amend the dollar amount of the article to \$0.00. All were in favor and the motion carried. Article 9 will be placed on the ballot as amended.

Mike Price asked the balance of the sidewalk fund. Jamie said all the money has been spent. The new 800 ft of sidewalk will be completed when Fairpoint, who is on strike, moves the utility poles.

Article 10. To see if the town will vote to establish a revolving fund pursuant to RSA 31:95-h, for the purpose of Police Public Safety. All revenues received for the purchase of police protective vests from any granting authority will be deposited into the fund, and the money in the fund shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year, and shall not be considered part of the town's general fund balance. The town treasurer shall have custody of all moneys in the fund, and shall pay out the same only upon order of the governing body and no further approval is required by the legislative body to expend. Such funds may be expended only for the purpose for which the fund was created. Recommended by the Selectmen

Jamie said when the police department purchases bullet proof vests we receive federal grant money in the amount of 1/2 of the purchase price. The grant money goes back into the general fund. This new account will be a depository for the grant money to be placed in for the future purchase of vests. Future funding will come from this revolving fund.

Article 11. By Citizens Petition, properly received, shall the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to negotiate and enter into a long-term (5 year) lease agreement with Main Street Art (a local non-profit organization) for the building at 75 Main Street, Newfields, NH. Said lease would renew the current lease with Main Street Art, subject to certain modifications to the terms and conditions as determined by agreement of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Directors of Main Street Art. Said lease shall require, at a minimum, that Main Street Art, at its own expense, maintain and upgrade the interior of the building, make improvements to the exterior of the building, maintain insurance for the protection of the Town, and pay for all utilities within the term in exchange for rent abatement.

Kelley Corson explained that the details of the lease would be worked out in the negotiations if the article passes. MSA has made extensive renovations and improvements to the building in exchange for free rent. They do pay the utility bills. The new lease MSA wishes to obtain for the next five years will be similar with the non-profit organization continuing to maintain the building.

Kerri Gosselin asked if the town would consider selling the building and whether or not it had to be a 5 year lease.

Kelley Corson said the town has attempted to sell the building in the past with no success. If MSA had the money they would consider purchasing it. The reason for the long term lease has to do with scheduling of classes.

Jack Shaw expressed his concern with leasing the building to MSA for a 5 year period of time free of charge in exchange for the upkeep of the building. MSA may be entitled to a legal ownership of the building for the improvements they have made. In his opinion, the board should seek legal counsel and receive money for the rental.

A motion was made by Jack Shaw and seconded by Mike Sununu to change the terms of the lease to, "annually renewable" rather than for 5 years. The motion was voted on and failed to pass.

John Hayden explained that citizen's petitions may be amended. Once the article has been warned the voters have the right and ability to amend the article. It is a warrant article just like any other article.

Kelley Corson added that for the past 5 years they have essentially been paying \$582.00 per month. Going forward they intend on maintaining the building, paying utilities, insurance and provide the community with added events. All MSA instructors are volunteers who are passionate about what they do and what they provide for Newfields.

The meeting adjourned at 8:46pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue McKinnon
Newfields Town Clerk